

Dejaeghere's new job reflects corporate commitment to training

Plan A: Open new stores.
Plan B: Manage existing stores.
Following those two simple imperatives has required the K mart Corporation to change as success shaped us into the second largest non-food retailer in America. Many changes have occurred within the last two years. Sheer growth demanded attention in key areas, and one of them is training.

That's where Ron Dejaeghere, as the new director of corporate training, comes in.

Because K mart thinks training is so important at all levels, to be certain we are doing the best job of training that can be done, Mr. Dejaeghere left sunny California, where he was assistant regional manager, and came back home to the Detroit area in a newly-created position.

"I plan to visit stores and determine what training materials the stores need to help personnel better understand their jobs more rapidly," he summarizes his job. "People can enjoy their work more if they fully understand what it is they should be doing."

In an organization of our increasing magnitude, with a variety of K mart store sizes, uniform instruction can be administered. Mr. Dejaeghere will be looking at the overall picture.

"Who knows if the type of material we're now using is the right type?" he wonders. "We need feedback from the people in the field. I hope you tell everyone that we welcome ideas from store level. Our job is to serve the people in the stores."

Taking ideas from the field and adapting them to the national operation is one of Mr. Dejaeghere's talents. "Most of the ideas I've handled in the Western Region had to do with store operations," he explained. "We reworked things according to good suggestions we

received—and that's basically what I plan to do in this new job."

Although he's looking at the entire operation, the checkout and stockroom are the two areas to be zeroed in on first. "We're going to try to intensify the training program at all levels, however. We really need to be bombarded with information from the stores."

Mr. Dejaeghere reports to Samuel Leftwich, senior vice president of personnel and employee relations. As with others, he's worked with Mr. Leftwich before, in two Regions.

"Having worked in the Central, Midwest and Western Regions over the years, I've met a lot of people," he says. "I've established lots of friendships, many with people now located here at headquarters, and I'm glad to be working so closely with them now."

Mr. Dejaeghere began his career in the Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe in 1949 at Store 226. His career carried him to Illinois, Colorado, Wyoming and finally California. "It's hard to figure out exactly how I got way to California from the Detroit area," he quips.

A family man with four girls and two boys, Mr. Dejaeghere supported the kids' interest in soccer, a popular sport on the West coast. "While I was coach, we had the losingest record in history," he admits.

"Instead of developing young kids to be obsessed with winning, my team enjoyed the game. Everybody had a stab at playing the front line."

It's an attitude of teamwork that has paid off during his career, in the "winningest" way. His road has been studied with innovative thinking and success, although he protests, "I only filtered suggestions."

Any losing is behind him now. "After establishing my soccer record," Mr. Dejaeghere adds with a smile, "I hung up my spikes!"



Ron Dejaeghere fills one of several newly-created positions in the K mart Corporation: director of corporate training. In his new job, Mr. Dejaeghere has the responsibility of tending the on-the-job training of thousands of employees in K mart stores across the country. Pronounce his name: Dee-A-ger.

Sunny side

K mart's 3154 and 3265, Minneapolis and Portland.

The quality of merchandise is excellent. All the garments are courteous and without (except past seasons) even a few attractive and I can almost find exactly what I want. I am also very pleased with the price of both sets and reasonable merchandise. If I have to return an item the salesman is always helpful and courteous. I get back almost everything I paid for.

When I shop, I always check out the service. I have found since I was a small child and I have been shopping at K mart "free and fast." The staff are very helpful and I have found when my three-year-old daughter and I go shopping, she always says she's going to be a K mart clerk.

Thanks for such great service.

K mart 4055, Battle Creek, MI—Lee Pendergast

I wanted to write this letter to say how impressed and pleased my husband and I were while we were purchasing our new appliances. Leo was very helpful with the details on the final, delivery, and performance. His efficiency in preparing closing papers and arranging for pick-up and delivery dates and times was very reassuring.

It is satisfying to speak and deal with someone who is always willing to give that something extra involving his job and merchandise. Leo has spent a great deal of time becoming knowledgeable about the merchandise which he sells, and if he doesn't know, he always says, "Gee, I don't know, but I can sure find out for you."

Once you are pleased and satisfied with a new sale we all know that SERVICE can sometimes be a headache and ruin all goodwill gained in the actual sale. NOT SO at K mart when Leo is your salesman. We had some minor mechanical malfunctions and all we did was call Leo and he said he'd take care of it. Within a day we had the rest of our merchandise again.

Our sincere appreciation goes out to Leo. Maybe a raise or at least some well deserved praise would show him how he plays a very important part in the good business that the American people at K mart enjoys, and keep him from becoming professional.

K mart 4378, Silver Hill, MD—Joan Shaskan

Yesterday I had occasion to stop at your store, the 4378, to have an oil and lube job done in your automotive shop. I left your store in almost a state of disbelief. Joe Shaskan did the job.

Kurdman? — YES! Courtesy? — YES! A mechanic, I must say, was topped with extreme competence in performing the needed service. Answering my questions relating to other customers' problems, he has been experiencing. He then took my car for a spin around the parking lot before letting me leave and saw that other large company two youngsters. Joe stopped, got out of my car and rendered assistance to the two victims at the assistance line.

Indeed, it is a rarity to come across an individual having such dedication as well as possessing other attributes. The occasion calls for more than the usual "thank you." I feel I would hope that, as I took time to pause in my daily activity to write this letter, it will, at last, be read personally by you before it is passed on down the line. Harry Truman used to say, "The buck stops here." I take this to mean taking credit for the good as well as the blame for the bad.

K mart 4166, Toledo, OH—Gail Huffman

I entered your store at approximately 12 noon and proceeded to purchase a variety of athletic supplies from Ms. Huffman using my Master Charge card. Because of the variety of things on my mind, I left my Master Charge card sitting on the counter after having completed the transaction and walked out of the store.

Ms. Huffman, to what I would describe as an unusual display of individual professionalism, spent quite some time Sunday evening trying to locate me to tell me that I had lost my Master Charge. I was in the library for the entire day on Sunday and could not have been reached by the telephone. However, on Friday morning at approximately 11:30 a.m. she called me and told me that I had lost my Master Charge in the store.

I am so impressed that I am writing to thank you for the service you have provided. I feel that your store is a model of customer service and I am sure that you will continue to provide the same level of service to all your customers.